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# AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

*Polytechnic Branch of the American Institute of  
the City of New York, May 20th, 1875,*

ON

## THE HUMAN FOOT:

Its Use, Abuse and Preservation,

BY JOEL McCOMBER,

INVENTOR AND PATENTEE OF THE "McCOMBER LAST;" ALSO,  
OF THE "McCOMBER PATENT GLOVE-FITTING  
BOOTS AND SHOES."



OFFICE AND STORE,

14 Union Square, New York.

1875.

## NEW ENGLAND TESTIMONIALS.

*See 3d page of cover.*

BOSTON, July 21, 1873.

MR. JOEL MCCOMBER — Dear Sir: I have, for several months past, worn a pair of boots made upon your patent lasts, which have given me entire satisfaction. No other last ever suited me so well.

CHAS. ENDICOTT, State Auditor of Mass.

BOSTON, Aug. 20, 1873.

MR. JOEL MCCOMBER — Dear Sir: Having worn boots made on your "patent last," I desire to express my entire satisfaction with the ease and comfort experienced from an excellent fit. The usual annoyance and unpleasantness of "breaking in" a new pair of boots is entirely obviated, — the boots fitting the foot at the start, and retaining their shape and beauty better than those made on the old plan.

J. A. CUMMINGS, 102 Washington St.

BOSTON, Aug. 20, 1873.

MR. J. MCCOMBER — Dear Sir: I have worn a pair of shoes for several months that were made on your last, and they give perfect satisfaction. They have been the most comfortable pair of shoes, and also kept their shape better, than any I have ever worn.

Yours truly, GEO. T. ANDREW, 5 Temple Place, Boston.

BOSTON, Aug. 22, 1873.

JOEL MCCOMBER, ESQ. — Dear Sir: I have worn a pair of shoes made on your patent last, and they have given perfect satisfaction. I shall wear no more of the old style if those made on your last can be found in this city.

C. W. HOLDEN, 102 Washington St.

BOSTON, Aug. 22, 1873.

MR. JOEL MCCOMBER — Dear Sir: I have worn two pairs of boots made on your patent lasts. As for style, ease, and comfort, they surpass anything I have ever worn. I have recommended them to several of my friends, and they also say they will never have their shoes or boots made on any other lasts.

Yours respectfully, JAMES H. WILLIAMS,  
30 Hanover St., Room 6.

SALEM, N. H.

MR. JOEL MCCOMBER — Dear Sir: I have worn a pair of shoes for more than three months made over your patent lasts. I have not had a day's comfort in any other boot or shoe for years. These are perfectly comfortable. And I would say to all, Try a pair of boots or shoes made over the McComber patent, and you will soon forget your pains, and bless the patentee.

Truly yours, REV. O. G. WOODBURY.

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Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1875, by JOEL McCOMBER, in the Office of  
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## TO THE PUBLIC.



IN introducing MR. JOEL MCCOMBER'S ADDRESS, we desire to state that we keep in stock and make to measure his celebrated PATENT BOOTS AND SHOES, in every variety of material, and for all ages and both sexes, at our new and centrally located store, No. 14 Union Square, New York City.

We also make his Patent Lasts to fit any measure, and mail instructions for self-measurement to all who apply for them. Our Price List, and other important information, will be found on page 36.

Several pages of testimonials, from citizens of various localities, will be found at the end of the pamphlet, and all who thus testify to the value of Mr. McComber's improvements will, it is believed, respond in like terms of commendation to such enquiries as may hereafter be addressed to them.

The pamphlet concludes with an extract from an editorial in *Hall's Journal of Health*, the editors of which have taken great interest in this reform.

These Patent Boots, Shoes and Lasts are attracting great attention from intelligent people everywhere, and we are filling orders from every State and Territory in the United States. A customer once secured becomes a permanent friend of the system, and his influence is certain to secure others for us. The ladies are our best patrons, as they have suffered most from the old plan, and are rejoiced to find a system which combines elegance with ease and perfection of fit.

JOEL MCCOMBER & Co.





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*Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:*

It is always a matter of congratulation to me who have faith in ideas, particularly when they have passed the ordeal of practical experience, to be able to lay them before an intelligent audience, accustomed to a rigid scrutiny and hard logic, unbiassed by prejudices or emotions—my subject being: “The Human Foot, its use, abuse and preservation.” On this theme, however, I fear that the heaviest thinking has been stimulated by the feelings, and those, too, not always of gentle nature, nor finding expressions in the language of delicacy. It is from this kind of *compulsory education* that I believe better knowledge can give us liberty; and perhaps there is no better invocation of your attention than is to be found in the utterances of Solomon, that wise man of antiquity:

“Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Thou shalt then walk in thy way safely, and thy feet shall not stumble. Happy is the man that

findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding."

The largest portion of human wisdom is turned to the acquisition of wealth; the remainder, with the aid of this accumulated wealth, is devoted to the procurement of ease, comfort, and freedom from suffering. It is, however, a notorious and universal experience, that by far the most prolific sources of human misery spring from what are known as the "minor evils" of life—those goading, petty, carking annoyances, from which, like the fabled gad-fly, escape seems impossible.

These "ills" are often considered, and really are supposed to be, "necessary evils;" but let it be remarked that the artificial and acquired are always sure to be classed alike with the unavoidable.

There are armies of heroes in society who can breast calamity and oppression, pass courageously through untold affliction, and vanquish giants of oppression, who readily fall helpless and suffering victims to aching joints, and crippled feet. No wisdom or courage can maintain its equipoise under the demoralization begotten in the nervous system by the steady irritation of just such insignificant causes. Not even the ancient stoics would have dared to hazard their powers of endurance thus. They wisely betook themselves to sandals, and escaped this terrible ordeal to their philosophy.

Nor is it possible to exaggerate the sad changes, and limitations wrought in human character and conduct which owe their origin to the permanent martyrdom growing out of the widespread ignorance, and consequent sad mutilation of those indispensable organs, which are to sustain, year after year, the weight and dignity of the human body.

In such bondage even the noble brain is tethered, the hand shortened, the body shackled, the whole active business of life crippled, happiness destroyed, and life itself dwarfed to a miserable existence.

Surely, then, next to the "getting of understanding," is the paramount necessity of getting something to *stand* upon, and thus of something to *go upon*! otherwise the bounding joys of youth may remain a boon for the unshod poor peasant boy; they cannot be for the pampered child of wealth, education and refinement.

Nor are the delightful walks of contemplation, or the sauntering hours of meditation, to be anticipated among the luxuries of refinement and the blessings of culture under adult life. Human joy is not the crop which outraged nature grows; and let the pangs and distortions of premature dotage tell of how much of its additional and unnecessary misery is due to the neglect of our ancestors, and to the gross—nay, barbarous—ignorance of untutored artisans, the unwitting cause of a refined and torturing cruelty, of which the most unmitigated savage would blush to be known as the author. Now, the human foot, in its natural form and comeliness, is one of the most beautiful objects for contemplation. Its graceful lines of curvature, its lithe and supple tissues, its fairy lightness and delicacy of construction, combined with its immense capacities for sustaining weight, and executing intricate movements, render it at once a mechanism of surpassing wonder and admiration.

No artificial substitute, in case of loss, has ever approached the original: and, at best, all such efforts have proved but clumsy and inadequate makeshifts.

But few eyes have ever rested upon a perfect foot—so unavoidably are those physical and organic defects perpetuated and handed down from parent to offspring—the

sad heritage of ignorance, for which no patrimony can compensate.

Yet, even in this state of imperfection, the foot of an infant is still beautiful; and, while it escapes the deforming grasp of the modern shoe, continues to exhibit those wondrous capacities which, alas! are certain to succumb to subsequent abuse. Thus it happens that a healthy, well-formed, natural foot, at adult age, is the rarest of exhibitions; whilst a secure tread, a safe step, a firm gait and graceful carriage, with ease and comfort, without fatigue and suffering, are certainly not often to be met.

Experience of surgeons proves that a large proportion of sprained joints, ruptured ligaments and fractured limbs, are the legitimate consequence of defective, deformed and weakened feet. All this is the direct result of failure to comprehend the simple and beautiful mechanism of the organs of locomotion, or to understand the anatomy of the foot as a magnificent series of arches, perfectly adapted to sustain the weight of the body, whilst, in the capacity of a living and growing machine, it enables us to move about with comfort and facility, in obedience to our wishes and necessities.

It has been a very old habit among human beings to ignore the study of their own bodies; and even among those learned and thoughtful men who have given much heed to head, lungs and stomach, few have expended attention upon these indispensable organs—the feet, which long since passed over to the tender mercies of charlatans, and corn doctors. It was once the fashion to discourage all such investigations. Even dissections—the absolute and only source of such knowledge—were contrary to law; while, within a comparatively short period, both in civilized Europe, and Amer-



ica, antiquity forbade it entirely. The work itself is unpleasant and uninviting, except to the enthusiast seeking for truth at the hazard of his own life, and at the sacrifice of ease and gain. Yet to these relatively few, the world owes all its enjoyments to-day from the contributions of science, and, though they are free gifts of knowledge to humanity, it is curious to note how perseveringly the fight has been carried on for every inch of recognition against stolid prejudice, ignorance, habit, custom and fashion. So difficult is it even now to induce the world to be logical, that it must be strenuously urged, by argument and proof, to examine, and almost coaxed to accept, any novel measure for the mitigation of its wretchedness. But a word must be allowed in explanation on this point; for arrogant pretenders have so often vaunted their bootless offerings under the specious name of "anatomical" foot coverings, that some confiding people have come to realize, through suffering, too much of their own anatomy, and thus nearly made the personal acquaintance of their own skeletons.

But whilst it is difficult to overstate the misery of ill-fitting foot-gear, it is but natural that the deceived should be doubting, incredulous and suspicious. Every new invention in its progress to the attainment of better methods, must be prepared to encounter this ordeal, competing, as it does, with invested pecuniary interest; and displacing, as it must, (if of intrinsic value) those inferior and barbarous productions, to which suffering men, women and children have so long made a lucrative but *forced* contribution. I gladly accept the conditions, firmly believing that human nature will not continue to obey the poetical mandate, "suffer and be strong," when they once find out, that science can make them stronger without suffering, and that, too, quickly, plea-

santly and at no additional money cost for precisely the same material, cut and made up upon correct principles, and guaranteed to give comfort and satisfaction the first time it is put on; whilst if made up, however costly, artistically or fashionably, upon the old, false, blundering, hap-hazard system, it can only end in a refinement of cruelty worthy of the famous inquisition itself.

A single trial would forever cut off all competition with the better method which science has now brought to light, and which skill and ample experience have established, beyond all question, to be the best, because its foundation rests on the established laws of Omnipotence. The humanity of the age is now interesting itself to protect the lower animal creation from cruel treatment—cruel to the beast, and brutalizing to the man! We, who (from ignorance or necessity) have become martyrs to distorted feet, invested with corns, bunions and painful ingrowing nails, hardly think that all this misery did not spring up in a day, but was the slow growth of many years, dating back to childhood. Nor do we reflect that we are deliberately and systemically preparing for the dear children committed to our care, the same horrible infliction. No, we are not brutal enough for that; we simply *never* think; perhaps we know no better; possibly never had our attention arrested by the immense fact, that all this is now unnecessary and (what is more to the point) *unjustifiable* suffering. Only take the trouble to look and convince yourselves. Just for one moment reflect that it is not suffering alone, or peevishness, or ill temper, or a brain pre-occupied and exhausted by the constant physical irritation of *pain*, for which you become responsible; but danger, actual jeopardy to life as well as limb! It is now an incontrovertible fact, which rests upon the most ad-

vanced judgment, that among the most serious maladies which imperil childhood are those finding their roots in this very condition of the nervous system, engendered by a disordered circulation in the feet, which are most remote from the heart, where it is most feeble and least able to bear disturbance.

Thus, the over-sensitive brain becomes seriously linked with the feet—the head with “the understanding.” Hereafter abstain from punishing your child as a dunce or “incorrigible,” until you find out by competent authority, that you yourself are not the unconscious cause of the sad havoc which is being from day to day perpetrated upon the innocent, physical, mental and moral character. Learn, if need be, by your own experience, to commiserate the helpless dependents upon your sympathy and good offices. But even adults need pay tribute no longer; for now the worst deformities which arise from the prolonged use of ill-fitting shoes may find relief by ceasing to fight against nature and her laws, to which the McComber Last owes all its acknowledged superiority, and upon which alone an accurately-fitting boot or shoe can be manufactured, which will prove as comfortable at the start as the old one it replaces; unlike the old one, which bruised, mangled and maltreated the sensitive foot in that terrible process of “breaking in.” The new shoe receives that abused organ like a tender mother, clasps it gently, and deals so kindly with it that, whilst soothed into quietude and gradually losing that exquisite sensibility which excited it to rebellion, it is brought not only into a state of reliable utility, but, under this benign and natural treatment, actually regains a portion of that form and comeliness to which the majority of human feet are strangers. There is no longer consistency in ridiculing the ignorant Indian who flat-

tens his child's head with a board, nor the heathen Chinese who willfully deforms the feet of his offspring with bandages of calico, whilst Christian people, in the nineteenth century, effect precisely the same result with *leather*. But, aside from the question of discomfort, the æsthetic world is coming to find out that the path to beauty lies in the ways of nature; and not in the strange ways of arbitrary fashion, which, on the same principle, would cut down all tall men and women, whilst stretching out the short ones, by way of bringing about a general style of systematic beauty. Who ever admired the awkward attempts of French arbor-culturists to improve upon nature, by shearing those graceful heads of waving leaves into round, oval, square, stiff, ungainly masses? And yet that is just what shoemakers have been trying to do with the human feet, under the name of "beautifying;" and the only method nature adopts to correct such morbid conceptions of beauty is, by the infliction of that suffering which inevitably follows the combined infraction of her laws. Health and beauty must abide together.

The power and efficacy of the foot is also destroyed or largely lessened by the unnatural pressure. If you would prove this, let me ask you who have worn the old-fashioned shoe for a lifetime, to experiment with your toes and see how much strength they possess. Of course, they should be vigorous and powerful; they should possess muscular force sufficient to support the entire weight of the body; but the wedging, cramping system of the old last destroys the power of the toes, by inducing partial paralysis—for any physician will tell you that absolute loss of power may be brought about by long continued pressure—renders natural, elegant, graceful and unrestrained locomotion impossible, and induces



more suffering than any other error that can be named.

It is safe to say that no single subject is of greater interest or importance to civilized human beings than the construction of covering for the feet ; for our northern climate, with its great extremes of temperature, its diversified seasons, and its sudden changes, it is necessary that our foot clothing should be adapted to a variety of conditions. Especially is it desirable that the feet should be protected from cold and moisture, and from sudden extreme and prolonged changes of temperature, as well as from those injuries, which locomotion among harsh and rude substances would surely occasion. For the protection of the feet from violence and climatic exposures, it has been found desirable to cover them with the prepared skins of animals. This formed the earliest foot-clothing of which we have any knowledge, and has been employed in all ages, alike by the savage and the civilized. Science has not been able to surpass it by the use of any manufactured fabric. To-day, as in all the past, "there's nothing like leather," from which to fabricate the needed clothing for the feet. Its excellences are many; and if it were the custom of shoemakers intelligently to mould their foot-clothing so that the members which they clothe would not be distorted thereby, and to use the best skins, properly prepared, nothing more could be desired. But the truth is, that very imperfect material is constantly employed, and the form into which that material is wrought has been, among all civilized nations, radically wrong, having very slight reference to the form of the foot, and still less to the various duties imposed upon it.

There is no exaggeration in saying, that in all the shoe stores in the great city of New York, and in all the

factories of Europe, you will not find one pair of boots or shoes, made on the ordinary last, which ought to be worn by any human being. They are all wrong, radically and totally wrong. It matters not for what class, age, sex or condition they are designed, the good or bad quality of the material entering into them counts for nothing; the price asked is of no consequence; the rude or the artistic workmanship has no bearing upon the subject; the fact that they are worthless, and worse than worthless, as clothing for the human feet, remains. They may be coarsely made, of worthless material, by machinery, and sell for a few shillings; or into their construction may enter the choicest, most carefully prepared and most delicate skins, and the most skillful handiwork, and the price may be enormous; still they are worse than valueless, because they are certain to inflict permanent evil, if not immediate misery, upon the unfortunate wearers.

From the distortion and deformity induced by the abominable shoes of the ordinary construction, which are almost in universal use, no age is spared. The torture and misery begin in infancy. As soon as the child begins to creep, a pair of leather cases are drawn upon the delicate, symmetrical and yielding feet. Every mother knows that the little boot which she ties upon the baby's foot is no more fitted to it than is the little sock which has preceded it. She knows, too, that it ought to be fitted with greater accuracy, because the material entering into it is comparatively rigid and unyielding, and is, therefore, capable of compressing the delicate structure, while the loose knitted sock readily adapts itself to the foot. In the case of the sock, the foot adapts it without difficulty; in the case of the shoe, the rigid leather distorts the foot to its own wretched proportion. The tottering child is ex-

pected to learn to walk with its feet thus constrained; and thanks to the fact that the poorest and most spongy leather is worked up for children. The distortion thus commenced is, however, kept up; the foot is bent unnaturally; the toes are crammed upon one another; the great toe is forced backward upon the smaller ones; an enlarged joint is commenced; an incipient bunion is projected; a permanent crop of corns is organized; and ample provision is thus early made for all the fearful distortion and terrible torture to which the race has been subjected from the beginning.

I do not propose to discuss here the subject of club-foot, and other deformities which exist at birth. There is, however, much testimony to the effect that the sufferings of the mother, from badly-constructed shoes, have entailed life-long deformity upon the child. Thoughtful physiologists say that the physical condition of the mother is not without marked influence upon the offspring, and nothing is more fully established than the doctrine of inherited physical and mental tendencies and conditions. The feet of all who wear shoes are deformed, and there is no exception to this rule. This deformity is towards *talipes* or club feet. The feet of the civilized nations may be said to be gradually changing from symmetry to deformity; and even now deformity has become the rule, and symmetry the exception.

I should like to preach to all parents a sermon, which they would remember. I should like to tell them how infinitely more important it is, that their children should be provided with properly formed foot-clothing, than that their own feet should be intelligently attired. I know of no missionary work of a secular character of anything like equal importance. To-day the ignorantly shod foot of every adult is mal-formed, and will never be restored

to the absolute symmetry of undistorted nature. But for the infant who has not inherited deformity, and who has never yet been consigned to the distorting vice of ignorantly moulded shoes, there would be hope, if the parents would but reflect and reason, and act accordingly. They must just give up all idea of learning anything from the shoemaker, however fashionable or however high-priced. Upon the shape of his last depends, of course, the interior form of the structure to be worn. His last bears only a remote resemblance to the human foot. There is not one foot in the universe to which the lasts which have been in use since the dawning of civilization are adapted; yet the shoemaker solemnly measures the foot, and then passes his strap around these blocks of wood, and is content if the dimensions correspond. Perhaps he causes the customer to stand on a sheet of paper while he outlines the foot with a pencil, and then proceeds to build the foot-clothing upon some incoherent idea of his own with reference to the outline, and the block of wood, which he applies to it with owl-like gravity. He has no system; he is utterly at sea. If he seeks to remedy the deformity which he, or some of his ignorant predecessors has created, he endeavors to accomplish the result by piling leathers upon the wretched last, the only means which occurs to his benighted understanding. Nor can the knowledge needed be gathered from books. The literature of the world is silent upon this topic. To be sure, some books have been written to show that the world is all at fault in the method of constructing foot-clothing, and some attempts have been made by well meaning writers, particularly in England, to effect a reform in this important matter; but no book has yet been issued which reaches the remedy, even in a remote degree. Cuts of deformed feet are numerous enough, and pictures



of foot-gear which the authors verily suppose will remedy the defects may be seen ; but one and all are based upon incorrect ideas, and leave the whole subject precisely where they found it, in a perfect muddle, with no sound philosophy upon which to base reforms, the necessity for which is certain to be universally acknowledged. I allude to the writings of Camper, Hale, Dowie, Meyer, and others, and to an anonymous book entitled, "The Feet," published by Wells, of New York, in 1871. All these works contain considerable curious information, and all assert the well-known facts of universal pedal deformity, but not one of them proposes any system of relief which is based upon scientific truth, and not one rises above absurdity in its consideration of the appropriate remedy. Their authors, with a uniformity consistent with their sublime ignorance of the subject, treat the human foot as an unchangeable member, forgetting that a foot in repose is a very different thing from a foot in motion, and that this essential difference varies with the kind and degree of duty imposed upon the marvelous structure. In their ignorance they would shoe the yielding foot of the human being as they would the horny and immovable hoof of the horse.

The so-called "anatomical bootmakers" are groping along by guess-work, precisely as are their less pretentious and equally benighted brethren. It is slow work to attempt to educate a thoughtless world up to a great principle, but it is infinitely more laborious to strive to open a crevice for the ingress of a trifle of common sense to the brains of unreasoning mechanics. If the success of this revolutionary improvement of mine depended upon the shoemakers, I should give up in despair. They do not reason or reflect. There is not one custom shoemaker in New York to-day who can tell you

at what point the upper portion of your new shoes, which you have not yet forced into some resemblance to the form of your feet, will bulge out or overhang the sole on the outer side, after you have worn them, until they are fairly (so-called) broken in, but really broken over ; and yet, if they understood the first rational principle of shoemaking, they could tell you with their eyes shut. The fact is, if the shoes were properly constructed, they would not tread over at all.

I have said that I did not propose to educate the shoemakers up to my principles. To the public I leave this herculean task. I am confident, however, that I can convince the public that there is relief in store for them from the torture which nobody desires, and that the shoemakers will be forced to comprehend what the world demands. It is this system of compulsory education that I am seeking to advance, and my converts are daily increasing. I wish I could impress a few important facts upon the public mind. The most important of these facts is, THAT DEFORMITY OF THE FEET IS UNIVERSAL, and will be until young people are properly shod. A foot once crippled can never be fully restored to a normal state. It is astonishing to what extent crippled feet induce ill temper, peevishness and meanness. Show me a man whose feet have been excessively distorted by the blundering of shoemakers, and, if he is not an angel, I will show you a most uncomfortable companion, a most irritable and selfish husband and father, and a most disagreeable person altogether. He is the worst customer a man can have. His whole moral nature seems to partake of the distortion of his bodily extremities. It is impossible to please him. I do not seek the patronage of this class that are entirely beyond redemption, although I do not refuse it. I will do all in my power to alleviate their

sufferings. I prefer, however, that they should give their patronage to the class of shoemakers who have deformed their feet and made life miserable for them. I prefer to provide clothing for that very large class—the moderately deformed. For them there is hope. Especially would I seek to begin with children, and thus secure for the rising race symmetry and comfort. But to convince parents that they are doing their children a grievous wrong by allowing them to wear the brutal foot coverings in common use, is difficult. They think the ill-formed slop goods of the shop good enough for the child. Why is this? How shall we account for the thoughtlessness of parents in this regard. Would they allow their children to wear gloves which deformed their hands and destroyed their power and usefulness? By no means. Yet to save trouble and the necessity of reflecting upon the subject, they will allow and compel their children to suffer misery, and permanent deformity in the way which I have indicated. It would seem as if the misery which parents endure would induce them to secure relief at any sacrifice for their offspring. The public have yet another lesson to learn. By their unfair course they compel absolute dishonesty on the part of shoemakers. They ask comfortable and excellent boots and shoes, made of first-class material, for less than the price of the leather and journeymen's wages for making them. The shoemaker is compelled to deceive them into the belief that he uses the best French Jodot calf skin in a ten or twelve dollar boot—a thing impossible. Articles made by machinery, of shoddy material, quite unfit to be worn, are palmed off for fine hand-sewed goods, and this because a fair price is grudged, and good work and good material cannot be supplied for the price paid. In nothing more

than in boots and shoes is "the best the cheapest." If poor leather is used the goods are quite worthless. If the fit is bad, the pressure and strain exercised by the foot materially lessen the wearing capacity. A badly formed boot must be a comparatively short-lived boot, though not as short-lived as it ought to be, since it ought never to have existed at all, and would not, but for the ignorance of the public, and the profound stupidity of the maker

The improvements which I have effected in the construction of the last upon which clothing for the feet is to be made, are readily seen by a comparison of the old and new methods. The old last is not made upon any defined plan or system. It does not resemble the foot, nor does it resemble anything else except itself. It is a nondescript structure, an anomaly, a monstrosity. It has length and thickness; it is square and round and oval; but it has very little in common with the human foot. You may ask a thousand shoemakers why they mould shoes over these unphilosophical blocks of wood, and they will all fail to give you a reasonable response. I venture to assert, that there never was a shoe made upon the old-fashioned last for our grandfathers, or their grandfathers, which presented an interior space shaped like any human foot in the world. Centuries have witnessed no important changes in this matter. The space may be large enough, too large, indeed; but it will surely be improperly arranged. Where there should be little room, there will be much; where space should exist for solid bone, space will be lacking; where the leather should permit muscular expansion of the foot in action, there will be compression and contraction; where the fabric should cling closely, it will be loose and slouchy. In a general way, it may be said that



the old last is a wedge, and that the shoe moulded over it presents a wedge-shaped interior. The feet, forced into this wedge-shaped sack of leather, are certain to be distorted, while the sack is, in turn, sure to be stretched out of its original shape, if the foot has any vigor remaining.

My last is also made of wood, and has dimensions. In arriving at these dimensions a distinct method is employed. The aim is to provide an interior space, which the foot shall exactly fill, without restraint at any point, except at the waist. Here a close fit is indispensable. The foot, clasped securely around the waist (the smallest part of the instep) is free at the toes to perform all its natural motions with ease. If the toes are compressed and the waist left loose, no such natural movement is possible, but all grace, ease and dignity of motion are lost.

If you will examine this last, you will discover that the tread or sole portion is moved outwardly. This change of position for the sole amounts to an average of about one inch. The fact is, the world has not heretofore walked on the *soles* of shoes, but upon soles and uppers alike. If you will hold up any shoe which has been worn long enough to take a shape which it did not originally possess, you will invariably notice, that the upper leather bulges far beyond the sole on the outside. So great is this tendency that, in the case of shoes made of soft and yielding material—such as enters into the construction of slippers—the upper, striking the ground in walking, will be quickly worn through along the outer line of the sole. If the sole were absolutely *under* the bearing surface of the foot, this could not occur, for at this point the foot spreads when in action, and just here the expansion

of the transverse arch of the foot must be provided for. You can only provide for this expansion by giving the expanding foot a sole to rest upon.

In all other lasts, the thickest portion is placed in the centre. Nature does not indicate that it should be in the centre; but some barbarous shoemaker in the past centuries decided that it made no difference where the thickness was placed so that the block of wood was of the proper girth. He made *his* last so, and this connecting link between the dark ages of the world and modern civilization has been sacredly preserved.

My last follows nature's lines. I drop the outer portion of the shank to nature's model, instead of hollowing it up unnaturally. The instep is exactly over a line drawn from the centre of the heel to the outer portion of the largest toe, naturally, and I carry the sole *underneath*, along the inner line of the large ball, precisely as nature has ordained. The large ball thus overhangs the tread, or bearing point of the sole. In the construction of shoes upon this last, it is as if you stood upon a piece of sole leather, trimmed to the outline of the bearings of the foot, and had the upper leather elegantly moulded to cover and protect its upper portion. This is the whole secret—conformity to nature and her laws. In this conformity a solid bone requires a comfortable resting space; a system of muscles, liable to be drawn upon for active service, have room for expansion, without being cramped, without occasioning injury to the adjacent parts, and without working deformity. The *sole*, in a word, must be placed under the foot and not partly under it, and partly beyond its bearing outline.

I need not further dwell upon the misery which the foot suffers through unequal pressure. In its *best* estate

the human foot energetically rebels against the evils which it strives so vainly to escape. Its protests are uttered in no uncertain language, and it is because of these protests that a better system has been studied out.

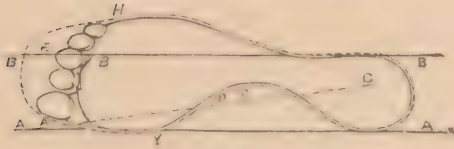
There are, however, feet which suffer distortion yet do not suffer pain in any great degree. These are the most unfortunate cases of all, as no warning cry of agony comes to demand relief for the abused feet. The suffering which accompanies the maltreatment of our bodies is important and salutary. It is the sentinel guarding the wonderful human fabric with sleepless vigilance, and telegraphing to the brain all unfair encroachments. Let no one who has worn boots and shoes from infancy to maturity claim that his feet are perfect, simply because he has not suffered greatly. It will be found, in such cases, that the undue and unequal pressure has so far paralyzed the nerves as to render them insensible to abuse. The circulation has been impeded, and sensitiveness has given place to obtuseness. Instead of "breaking in" the shoe, the foot itself has been broken in, and in losing its symmetry has lost also its desire and its ability to complain. It becomes the worst victim to the unholy warfare waged by ignorance, because an unresisting one. The worst foot is the foot which wears whatever leathern thing the shoemaker puts upon it, and never complains. The best foot is the active, vigorous one, which openly rebels—in corns and bunions and bad nails and sore places—against the cruel treatment. For this there is a certainty of salvation; for the other there is little hope. In most cases of deadened sensibility it will be found that the trouble has been wrought in infancy and in childhood. It is then that the superior judgment of the observing parent should be exercised, to save the little one from distortion and lasting

injury. Excessive pressure upon any part deprives it of the power of feeling, if applied long enough. It is the duty of the parent then to see to it that the child is protected in this regard, as distortion begun during the years of growth is never wholly recovered from.

I call upon the public to investigate more fully this all-important subject. I know precisely what the result will be, because I have observed the effect of a comprehension of the magnitude of my improvements by thousands of highly intelligent persons. The system speaks for itself; it is only necessary for the seeker of knowledge to place himself in a position to hear and understand. I have been striving after absolute perfection in this direction for more than thirty years. The number of my converts and customers lead me to believe that it has been attained. I do not know of one among them all who would be willing to forego the comfort already experienced.

My system for clothing the feet is widely admitted to be a boon to humanity, and only needs examination and use to find universal appreciation and adoption. It has secured the endorsement of the most competent authority, as the best and only successful attempt to perfect boots and shoes for human feet, in accordance with those natural laws upon which they are constructed. It is, therefore, confidently and earnestly commended to the attention of all intelligent and rational persons, who value their own comfort, with the certain assurance that personal experience of its inestimable blessings will urge them to extend its usefulness among their suffering fellow-creatures.

Let me ask your attention to some diagrams which I have prepared, in order to exemplify more clearly the advantages of my system. In No. 1, I show you the outline of the bottom of a natural, undistorted human foot, indicated by the inner unbroken line. Outside of this you will



No. 1.

observe a dotted line. This represents the sole of my last. The line extending from A to A, I call the base line. A curious fact here appears. If you take a perfect human foot (a rare thing to find) and draw a line from the inner side of the bearing of the heel, touching the bearing of the ball or large joint of the great toe, the line will be found to touch that toe throughout its entire length until you reach the point where it begins to round off at the nail. But as the natural position of the great toe, without the stocking on, is to stand off from the second toe, from three-eighths to one-half inch and as it involves an unnecessary space between i



No. 2.

and the second toe—as will be seen by diagram No. 2—I slightly swing the great toe over, as it would be when the stocking is on, so that it nearly touches its fellow without being compressed. If I were to allow for this useless space in making my last, I should provide considerable waste room and waste leather, besides giving a very awkward appearance to the shoe. I do not force the great toe beyond the natural swing of



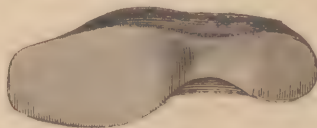
the joints ; I merely take advantage of that natural swing to carry the toe towards its nearest neighbor. Some writers have urged that the great toe must be allowed to stand off from the second toe, as in infancy, when the toes are sprawling in all possible directions. This is a fallacy. At maturity the muscular and bony structures are found to have grown firm, the tendons and ligaments are solidified, and the entire foot has become as it were consolidated. The toes cannot be pinched or compressed, without inducing misery and an awkward gait; but they can be placed in direct and gentle apposition or approximation to each other without injury to themselves, without obstruction to the natural movements of the body, and without in any degree lessening their powers of usefulness.

I now draw a second line, extending, as will be noticed, from B to B. This runs exactly parallel with the line extending along the inner side of the foot, and equi-distant from it the width of the heel. This I call the sole line. You will observe that this line leaves out more than two of the toes, and nearly one-third of the width of the foot. In making my last the sole is extended outward, or, so to speak, is pushed along sideways under the foot all the way from the heel to the toe, thus placing sufficient bearing surface beyond the sole line for the foot when in action. This, in all cases, provides width on the outside for the spread of the foot, which is bound to occur, as the expansion of the transverse arch of the foot, from the nature of the structure, when standing or walking, must be provided for; and if no provision is made, it will take place against the upper leather, and induce infinite suffering; corns will come on the outside of the small toe, or between the toes, and every step will add to the deformity.

In the old last no provision whatever has been made for this expansion—no allowance for the use of the muscles of the foot—while at the same time, a natural foot, the transverse arch of which has not been weakened or destroyed by the old shoe, will spread three times as much in the old shoe as in shoes made on my system, because the principal weight of the body is thrown on the outside ball, the weakest part of the foot, expanding it three times beyond its natural tension—first reducing the natural arch to a flat surface, and then actually reversing the arch; whilst nature did not intend that the outside ball should take any considerable weight, but that the heel and inside ball should take nearly the whole, and the outside ball just enough to steady and balance the body and keep it from falling over. Hence the reason why shoes made on my system look much smaller and narrower than the old, because the weight is thrown upon the ball inside of the arch, which is firm, and abundantly capable of sustaining the weight.

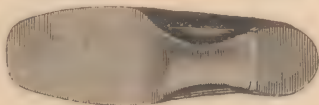
Before I proceed to tell you how I accomplish this essential condition, without making my shoe look as broad and crooked and awkward as the so called anatomical shoemakers in their nondescript concerns, I will call your attention to a diagonal line extending from C to A. This begins in the centre of the heel and stops at a junction with the base line at the great toe. This I call the instep line, because exactly over this line hangs the instep cone, or highest portion of the last, as it is also the highest and thickest part of the foot all the way down the instep to the end of the great toe. This instep is shown in another diagram. You would naturally conclude at first sight that a shoe built out an inch or two beyond the centre of the instep line in the old last would be wide and ungainly. On this point I will simply explain, that

the sole or tread, or bearing surface of my last, is no wider than that of the old-fashioned kind; it is merely pushed sideways under the foot. I cut it under, so to speak, on the inside; that is to say, I build the last out on the inside of the instep and ball so that it shall overhang the sole. Several of the diagrams show this peculiarity. I thus form a generous space for this hard, thick abutment of the arch. I give the unyielding part of the structure a comfortable resting place, so that it is not being forced, and in its turn forcing the upper leather to assume a position beyond the limits of the sole on the outside. The bearing surface, or tread, or sole, is thus preserved of fair width, and is placed just where the weight comes, whilst freedom of action, weight and motion is thus preserved. As a result upon the future action, the upper leather does not tread over the sole, as is the case with the old fashioned shoes. A glance at diagrams 3 and 4 will show you what I mean. No. 3 is made from a photograph of a boot constructed on an ordinary last, and had been worn until broken in. The outer ball, of course, extends beyond the sole. The toes do not; but this is only because they cannot, as they are held in their cramped position by strong leather. If that leather were cut away, you would discover two toes and a half instantly protruding beyond the edge of that sole. But the outer ball has forced the upper leather over the sole, and nobody can tell how fearfully the poor foot has suffered in the operation.



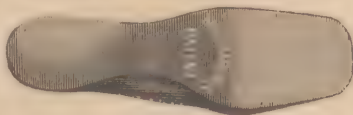
No. 3.

No. 4 shows you how the sole should look after months of wear: there should be no bulging or treading down of the upper leather outwardly. The sole should still be where it was first placed, under the bearing of the foot.



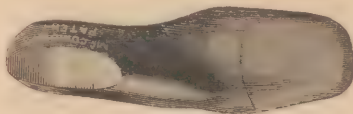
No. 4.

Referring you again to diagram No. 2, I desire to say that it represents a natural foot, with the groined arch unbroken and the toes spread out. It will be noticed that the actual bearing surface is quite narrow, except at the toe and heel. The heel, and the inner ball, with its great-toe continuation, are the chief points of contact, and these sustain the body's weight. If the double arches of the foot were broken down, as they often are from the effect of bad clothing, the sole would more ready resemble the surface of diagram No. 1—a flat, unarched structure. The lighter portions of diagram No. 2 show the rounded outline of the pads, which protect the muscular and bony structures from the effect of concussion. If the toes shown in diagram No. 2 were brought into gentle opposition to each other, as they would be were a stocking drawn on the foot, the sole of a shoe cut according to the dotted lines of diagram No. 1 would be found to cover perfectly the bearing surfaces.



No. 5.

Here (No. 5) is a view of the sole of my last, with the inner overhanging ball. It will be found to be symmetrical and elegant in appearance. The outline of its sole is the outline of Fig. 1.



No. 6.

This is a top view of my last. You will notice the instep following the line from the centre of the heel to the outside of the great toe, thus placing the thickest part of the last just where the human foot is thickest. If you say this last looks crooked, you must remember that you are looking at the top now, which has a crooked appearance on account of the overhanging ball. You must look again at the *sole*, which you will notice is less crooked than most of the blocks of wood which shoes have heretofore been made over. If you say that this ball is more prominent and overhangs more than the natural foot, I must tell you that this is necessary, in order to provide for the natural contraction of the upper leather—the tendency to draw back after the last is withdrawn and the tension released. After numerous exact reproductions of the foot, with the same tendency on its part to press over toward the outer side, I discovered that I must leave an excess of wood on my last at this overhanging point of the large ball. This provided a spacious resting-place for the more prominent parts of the foot and secured an even tread upon the sole, without the outer bulging of the upper. This overhanging prominence of the inner ball



—which is an essential part of my invention—is also shown in the following diagrams, Nos. 7 and 8 :

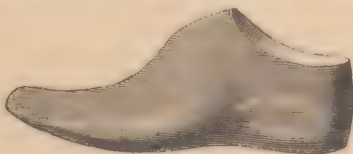


No. 7.



No. 8.

In the next diagram (No. 9), which is an outside view of the last, we are shown the sole of the shank, or outer margin of the hollow of the foot, nearly level with the



No. 9.

sole of the outer ball and heel, as is the case in the human foot. The ordinary last makes no account of this anatomical fact, but hollows the last at this point, and thus secures uncomfortable pressure from the shoe, in a spot where pressure should be but light. If you wet the bottom of your foot and then stand on dry paper, you will notice that the shank, or outer portion of the hollow of the foot, leaves a slight mark, while the inner surface, the arch, does not touch unless your foot is broken down. This will convince you that the last should be made hollow, or arched on the inside, and should be left nearly flat on the outside.



No. 10.

An inspection of this diagram (No. 10) shows you the outward extension of the last to provide for the spread of the foot. Here you are looking directly at the back of the heel ; but beyond it is shown the outer ball and the space provided for the smaller toes, which, in the old last, are not taken into account, and therefore are left utterly unprovided for. There is absolutely no method of securing comfortable shoes on the old last, except by submitting to a surgical operation for the removal of the two smaller toes and about one-third of the thinnest portion of the foot. Not only is no place provided for them in the marvelous wisdom of the average last-maker, but the added injustice is done them of forcing the larger toes over upon them by reason of a lack of suitable space for the more powerful neighbors.



No. 11.

The diagram here shown (No. 11) exhibits the foot in its abominable leathern cell, projecting on the outside far beyond the edge of the sole, with the small toes bent inward upon themselves, like the phalanges of a partly closed hand, and with the great toe distorted out of all human shape. It is not an anomalous toe, by any means. It is taken from life, and is a common type of distortion.



No. 12.

Here (No. 12) the same foot is seen uncovered. The great toe has been swung, by the gradual, unceasing pressure of leather, nearly two inches out of its true line. As it has moved, the space left in the joint has gradually filled with osseous material, and the great, unsightly protruding and permanent joint is the result. What misery all this deformity announces! What days of agony it asserts! What torture, which might readily have been dispensed with, had the better system prevailed.

A brief description of the method which I adopt in constructing a last to fit the foot will, perhaps, prove interesting. This is best shown by reference to the accompanying diagram (No. 13).



No. 13.

The person to be measured stands upon paper, with bare feet. Their outlines are then traced with a pencil, as shown in the first diagram. A line is now drawn from the inside bearing of the heel to the inside bearing of the ball, through to the end of the great toe. A parallel line is next drawn upon the other side, which passes through the third toe, the distance between the two being determined by the width of the heel, as shown in diagram No. 1. In this way the exact position of the instep, the shank, the ball, the toes, the play of the muscles, and the natural spring and spread of the foot, are accurately ascertained.

The location of the instep relative to the length of the foot is determined mainly by measurement. A glance at any foot not deformed, however, will show that it is never located in the centre of the foot, but is invariably upon the inside of the centre line. From these diagrams, and the correct measurements taken (the lines on the diagram being followed), the Last is constructed; and when thus made in strict accordance with the natural form of the foot, it will be found to be in practice far

preferable to any other. Boots and Shoes made upon it will accurately and comfortably fit the feet, and will not tread over, as the foot is held squarely upon the sole. The boots also made upon this Last make a better appearance than the ordinary ones, as they retain their proper shape until worn out. Here are reproductions





by photograph of a pair of ladies' McComber boots which had been worn more than three months. It will be seen that the upper leather does not bulge out and overhang the sole, as is always the case with boots made on the common last.

The attention with which my remarks have been received convinces me that the subject is not without interest to you. Of its importance, all thoughtful persons must bear me witness. If ignorance has brought misery to all mankind, it is important that the power so to abuse and torment and deform shall cease. It *will* cease when the people are educated to a knowledge of the old errors, and the nature of the reform. To this end I labor, and in this labor I ask your co-operation.

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It is within my province to offer suggestions for the proper care of boots and shoes. The leather may be so preserved as to endure for a long period, and remain soft and pliable. Oil applied to leather quickly rots it. The best French calfskins are Jodot; tallow is the only oily ingredient used in finishing and dressing these skins. I would recommend the occasional use of a little suet, which can be rubbed (cold) upon the surface of the leather; the oil from the suet is absorbed into the pores of the skin, and thus the leather is not only kept pliable but the strength of its fibres is preserved. The ammonia of the insensible perspiration of the foot unites with the oily ingredient in the leather and turns it into soap, which is readily soluble in water, and the leather becomes brittle. In the excessive use of paste blacking a thick scaly covering is formed on the surface of the upper, which has also the effect to decay the leather and render it brittle and liable to crack. These errors guarded against, and rubbers avoided, and boots and shoes will be found to wear **much longer than at present.**

## A C A R D.

I desire to inform the public that I have largely increased my facilities for the production of my Patent Boots and Shoes and Lasts, for all ages, sexes and conditions, having united with me a gentleman of large experience in the business, and with capital ample for all demands. The firm known as Joel McComber & Co. will make to order McComber's Patent Boots and Shoes and Patent Lasts, in every style. We use only choice material and employ none but superior workmen, who have been carefully educated up to our improved system. We can send Boots or Shoes by mail or express, which will never fail to fit if the measure is properly taken. If the measure is not right, and the goods are not the proper size, they may be returned by paying costs of conveyance both ways, and others will be forwarded until perfect satisfaction is secured. We forward our Patent Lasts in the same manner and on the same conditions. Persons sending measures and ordering Lasts will find it to their interest to have the first pair of Boots or Shoes made by us, to prove or test the Lasts, as shoemakers not accustomed to them are liable to make the Boot wrong by not working according to the Last, and by not Lasting it properly. We accompany the Lasts with patterns for the uppers of boots or shoes, as the ordinary patterns will not answer.

Our new store, on Union Square, directly opposite the Washington equestrian statue, is very centrally and conveniently situated, and is under the immediate supervision of Mr. Joel McComber, the inventor of the system. He invites all persons, whether in the Shoe Trade or out of it, to call on him and investigate its merits.

We keep no goods except such as are constructed ac-

according to McComber's Patent method. The work which we make is exclusively hand-sewed, and of the costliest and finest stock. We, however, keep machine-sewed work, which costs less. Our \$16 Men's Boots are superior to the best made by some makers in New York for \$22. They contain the finest Jodot French Calf upper and the best Bend sole. The material is the best and the most costly in the world, and the Boots which our skilled workmen construct from it, according to our system, are unequaled in elegance and durability in any country. As for comfort, their wearers bear earnest testimony that they stand alone and unequaled. We mail McComber's descriptive pamphlets free. Our terms for all goods are cash, to accompany the order. We cannot send C. O. D.

Respectfully yours,

JOEL MCCOMBER & Co.

P. S.—See directions for measuring the feet, and price lists. Terms to manufacturers and shoemakers for our Patent Lasts will be sent on application.

The editor and publishers of the well-known popular magazine, "Hall's Journal of Health," kindly authorize us to refer all persons who desire the judgment of competent and disinterested medical men to them. They have carefully investigated our system, and consent to answer such letters of inquiry concerning it as may reach them, addressed to "Hall's Journal of Health," 137 Eighth Street, New York. They will also bear testimony to the honorable manner in which we conduct our business.

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*Directions for Taking Measures for McComber's Patent Boots and Shoes and Patent Lasts.*

1st. After removing shoes and stockings stand erect upon a sheet of paper, bearing equally upon both feet,

and draw a well-sharpened pencil around the foot, being careful to keep close to the bearing portions of the foot—in other words, draw a line close to that portion of the foot which comes in contact with the floor; be very careful not to make the draft any wider or longer than the foot. Mark and measure both feet



2nd. Place the stockings upon the feet and cross the legs, allowing the foot to be measured to hang naturally, and then with a tape measure take the seven measurements shown in the above illustration. Measure exactly upon the lines shown, and place the result in inches and fractions. Allow the toes to hang during this measurement.

NOTICE.—If any bunions or other protuberances are upon the feet, mark their exact size upon the proper place in the diagram. If any points are particularly tender, mark and describe their location.

## PRICE LIST.

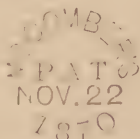
*Lasts for Ladies or Gentlemen, to fit the feet, \$5 per pair.*

Men's Calf Boots, our own make, Jodot.	-	\$16 00
" Button Boots	" -	13 00
" Congress Boots	" -	12 00
" Balmorals	" -	12 00
" Strap or Oxford Tie Shoes	" -	10 00
Ladies' French Kid Button, Hand-sewed, our own make		\$10 00
" Pebble Goat	" " -	9 00
" Serge Fox	" " -	9 00
" Plain	" " -	8 00

We also keep a line of goods not our own make which we will sell at lower prices.

## NOTICE.

WE desire to call public attention to the fact, that many dealers, in various parts of the country, who decry the McComber Patent Last, are yet falsely claiming to keep in stock goods made upon it. It is proper to state, that by a legal and binding obligation, all goods made on McComber's Patent Last must be plainly stamped with the following circular device :



It is a felony to so stamp goods not made on McComber's Patent Last, and a breach of contract to omit it



from goods which are entitled to it. But no person or firm authorized to use this stamp will omit its use, as the demand for goods bearing this stamp is at present greater than can be supplied. With new converts constantly occurring among manufacturers, and growing facilities, it is believed that the time is not remote when the demands of all will be promptly met.

### CERTIFICATES.

*Letter from DANIEL AYRES, M. D., LL.D., Professor of Clinical Surgery in Long Island College Hospital.*

BROOKLYN, April 16, 1875.

JOEL MCCOMBER, Esq.—*Dear Sir*: Among my most unpleasant physical experiences has always been the ordeal of "being fitted" to a new pair of boots or shoes. Notwithstanding unusually careful efforts to secure skill in this matter, and irrespective of the fancy prices which such "high art" is sure to demand, the final result has, nevertheless, been the same—to wit: much suffering (or at best only reaching a tolerable comfort) and never entire satisfaction—until your inventive genius led me to hope for better results, and induced me to make a minute study of the principles upon which your "patent last" is constructed, and to compare them with the anatomical structure and physiological working of the human foot. So perfectly have you caught and applied the principles involved, that it now seems as though the whole attention of "last makers" in past ages had been given to the problem of "how *not* to achieve" the object in view. I am thoroughly convinced that you are entitled to the credit of being the first to demonstrate how it *can* be done, and that, too, effectually. This conclusion has been reached after watchful observations of many persons of both sexes, whose past experience was very similar to my own, and who, after the trial of boots and shoes made on your lasts, have not only assured me of their entire freedom from all discomfort, but that living and moving had become an enjoyment to which they had formerly been strangers. Yet to every individual *personal experience* must always carry the stronger conviction, and my own has realized far more than I was led to anticipate from the early study of your invention. I, too, can now affirm that the new shoes may be a "luxury" and no longer "the bane" of life; and, therefore, cheerfully give it as my opinion that any person using shoes, *properly* made upon

your lasts, need have as little uneasiness as in the wearing of perfect fitting kid gloves.

After observing so much physical suffering, annoyance, bad temper, loss of time, and ill health from this source, the best I can do is to congratulate both the public and yourself that you can be of such mutual assistance and benefit to each other.

Yours respectfully,

DANIEL AYRES, M. D.

*From the well-known Dr. W. W. HALL, editor of "Hall's Journal of Health."*

"As the editor of *Hall's Journal of Health*, my attention was drawn several years ago to Mr. JOEL McCOMBER's investigation into the true anatomy and physiology of the human foot, with a view to furnish shoes not only beautiful, easy fitting and elegant looking, but so natural in their shape that those who wear them in early youth can never have corns, bunions, and other deformities; while those who are thus afflicted will find, that by wearing the McCOMBER boot or shoe, the steady tendency is for the foot to resume its natural shape, and for the deformities to be gradually corrected, and in very many cases entirely removed—as personal experience in our own household has demonstrated. The views embraced in Mr. McCOMBER's lecture before the American Institute are strictly physiological, and the advantages resulting from having the feet free from all unnatural conditions in the direction of walking, and promoting the health, happiness and comfort of the individual, are not overstated."

W. W. HALL, M. D., etc.

NEWTON, MASS., April 24, 1874.

MR. JOEL McCOMBER—*Dear Sir:* This certifies that I have examined Mr. McComber's last with pleasure and satisfaction, its principle being such as especially recommends it to the physician and physiologist, as, indeed, I should suppose, to the common sense of everybody.

The idea which serves as the basis of its construction, that of shaping the shoe to the foot, instead of shaping the foot to the shoe, is so simple and sensible that I wonder some one has not put it in practice long ago.

Shoes which I have had made for myself on this last fit exactly on first trial, and do not have to be "BROKEN IN," there being no pinching or pushing aside one way or the other, but the pressure being equable. Such a shoe is like a first quality kid glove of proper size, and can be worn about as comfortably the first day as the fourth week.

HENRY M. FIELD, M. D.,

Prof. Mat., Med. and Therap., Dartmouth Med. Col.

DANSVILLE, LIVINGSTON CO., N. Y.

MR. JOEL McCOMBER—*My Dear Sir*: I wish to express to you the high appreciation I have of the service you have done humanity in giving to it the most scientific style of boot in relation to the foot, anatomically considered, I have ever seen.

So comfortable from the first moment, and always so easy, nothing could induce me to return to the ordinary style.

Yours very truly, DR. JAMES H. JACKSON.

23 SOUTH OXFORD STREET, BROOKLYN, *April 15, 1875.*

JOEL McCOMBER—*Dear Sir*: The boots you made for me upon your "patent last" are entirely satisfactory. They have already afforded me very great relief, and I desire to recommend any one who has suffered from deformed or tender feet, or who wishes to avoid such suffering, to try boots made upon your lasts.

Very respectfully yours, CHAS. COREY, M. D.

203 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, *April 27, 1875.*

MR. J. McCOMBER—*Dear Sir*: In justice to you I would say, the comfort I take with my new shoes compels me to express my great satisfaction. After many years of suffering, as many others have, I was induced by my son (who is much pleased with the shoes you made for him) to find your store on Union Square.

I struggled with the prejudices of habit against new theories or inventions, but I have yielded to what has reached my reason; and the shoes made from your patent last, after your peculiar way or method of fitting the foot, has just begun to enable me to take comfort where I have so long suffered.

Yours respectfully, S. W. C. WHITE.

744 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, *May 21, 1875.*

MR. JOEL McCOMBER—*Dear Sir*: After many unsuccessful attempts to get boots that would afford me comfort, I was induced to have a pair made on your Patent Last. These I have worn constantly for four months with entire satisfaction. I therefore take pleasure in recommending your Last, not only to those suffering from tender feet, but to all who desire a perfectly comfortable boot. I could not, after my experience, be induced to use any other. Yours respectfully, WM. W. WYMAN.

39 WEST 26TH STREET, *May 19, 1875.*

JOEL McCOMBER—*Sir*: It gives me pleasure to say the boots you made for me are the most easy and pleasant and agreeable boots I have ever worn. Truly yours, SALLIE HOLLEY.

289 HICKS ST., BROOKLYN, 1874.

MR. JOEL MCCOMBER—*Dear Sir:* I would cheerfully add my testimony to numerous others, that the boots and shoes manufactured by you, upon the McComber patent last, are not only elegant in style, but as easy and comfortable as if moulded to the feet. Since I purchased the first pair, nearly two years since, I have worn none others, and, while these can be obtained, shall never torture my feet by ill-fitting boots. Very truly,

EVELYN K. JOHNSON.

LIVINGSTON ST., BROOKLYN.

MR. JOEL MCCOMBER—*Dear Sir:* During the past year I have worn shoes made on McComber's last, and they have given me entire satisfaction in point of ease and durability.

MRS. S. E. RICE.

NEW YORK, June 9, 1874.

MR. JOEL MCCOMBER—*Dear Sir:* The shoes made for me on the McComber patent lasts promise well. The habit of running down has been overcome. My step is firmer and more easy. As to shape and comfort, the shoe is satisfactory.

CHAS. WAGER HULL.

NO. 8 WARREN STREET, N. Y., June 11, 1874.

MR. JOEL MCCOMBER—*Dear Sir:* I take great pleasure in informing you of the fact that I am very much pleased with the boots made on the McComber lasts. I have worn nothing else for the last two years, and do not intend to for years to come. I feel perfectly safe in recommending them to others. I think you are a public benefactor, and wish you great success.

Yours truly, W. S. HUNTINGTON.

82 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, April 23, 1875.

This is to certify that I have been wearing boots manufactured by JOEL MCCOMBER, on his patent lasts, and freely and cheerfully say that I have never enjoyed such comfort with my feet. In my opinion Mr. MCCOMBER's theory is perfect.

JOSEPH J. CORNELL.

150 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, April 24, 1875.

TO JOEL MCCOMBER, ESQ.—*Dear Sir:* I take pleasure in testifying to the comfort and satisfaction my whole family have taken in wearing the shoes made on your patent lasts. We will now have nothing else. Very truly,

GEO. M. COIT.

41 WEST 26TH STREET, May 1, 1875.

I take great pleasure in saying that Mr. McCOMBER's boots are the most satisfactory of any which I have ever worn. Until I found them I never knew what comfort was with new boots. I put on those made by Mr. McCOMBER and walk at once without suffering or annoyance. I am sure they would be worn by everybody if there excellencies were generally understood.

MRS. KATE RATHBONE.

203 BROADWAY, N. Y., April 28, 1875.

MR. McCOMBER has made a pair of lasts and shoes for me, and I have had demonstrated to my *comfortable* satisfaction that his theory is correct. So long as I wear boots and shoes they shall be made only on the "*McComber last*."

G. C. WHITE, JR.

JOHNSTOWN, N. Y., May 21, 1875.

MR. McCOMBER—*Dear Sir*: After having worn a pair of your boots made upon the McComber Patent Last, I must say that they are the most comfortable boots I have ever worn, and I shall hereafter wear no other kind.

J. H. DECKER.

HICKMAN, KY., May 20, 1875.

JOEL McCOMBER & Co.—*Dear Sirs*: Yours of the 15th inst. came duly to hand. I received the boots all right by express, and am very much pleased with them. Yours truly,

C. H. HUBBARD.

NEW YORK, May 11, 1875.

MR. J. McCOMBER—*Dear Sir*: Having worn two pair of boots made on your lasts, I cheerfully testify to the satisfaction received. Your boots needed no "friend" to *break them in*—have worn squarely and done excellent service. I can recommend them honestly.

Very truly,

G. S. ADAMS.

NEW YORK, May 10, 1875.

MR. JOEL McCOMBER—*Dear Sir*: We have received and tried the shoes made by you for us on your "patent last." They are "a perfect fit," and prove to our satisfaction that your last is constructed on the true principle, and is far better than those hitherto in use. We hope and expect that it will soon be generally adopted. We cordially recommend it to the public.

REV. DR. D. B. COE,  
REV. DR. H. M. STORRS.



50 DOUGLASS STREET, BROOKLYN, *April 15, 1875.*

MY DEAR MR. McCOMBER.—The shoes you made for my son and daughter are exactly the fit; snug, and at the same time easy, and the best shoe ever in my family. I have carefully examined the McCOMBER last and shoes, and I must say that, in form and comeliness and comfort, your principle meets a long desired want. I am impatient to see these shoes on every member of my family, and I hope we may always have these shoes, and no others.

Wishing you adequate rewards for your long study and labors in this direction, I am, very truly, your friend,

REV. R. O. PAGE.

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126 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, *April 15, 1875.*

MR. McCOMBER—I take pleasure in testifying to the comfort I have derived from wearing boots made on your patent last. I never knew what it was to be able to put on a new pair of boots and wear them right along (without any breaking in process) till I tried your last. The utility of your invention cannot be doubted, and for comfort and neatness I do not think that boots made on your last can be equalled by any other make.

JAMES M. McLAREN.

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131 MERCER ST., NEW YORK, *July 7th, 1875.*

MR. McCOMBER.—It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the great value I place on your patent boots since wearing them. I have never had anything so near what a man wants as the pair I now wear. Yours,

A. L. THOMAS.

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137 EIGHTH ST., NEW YORK, *July 8th, 1875.*

MR. JOEL McCOMBER—*Dear Sir:* Not having had time to procure a pair of boots to be made upon the lasts you delivered to me in February last, before sailing for Liverpool, I carried the lasts to London and directed a celebrated bootmaker in Oxford street to make me a pair of boots upon them. He did so, and I began to wear them on the very day they were finished. They were not only perfectly comfortable as walking boots, but I found, in a very few days, that sensitive spots upon my feet, which had been troublesome after a long walk in other boots, were not only no longer sensitive but had absolutely been cured. I take great pleasure in saying, that I shall hereafter have all my boots made upon your last. I cannot imagine how any one who has experienced the comfort your boots afford can consent to wear any others.

M. GIBBS.

316 W. 34TH ST., NEW YORK, June 3rd, 1875.

MR. JOEL MCCOMBER *Dear Sir:* The shoes you made for me on your patent last have given me entire satisfaction—in fact I never before had so much comfort with a new pair of shoes. I will never again be without two pair. You may therefore make for me one pair more, just like the others, and send them to me with your bill. I consider your patent a very decided improvement on the old style of boots and shoes. Yours truly,

L. RINGGOLD SHARP.

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*From HON. FRANK FULLER, formerly Governor of Utah, 137 Eighth Street, New York.*

I have been seeking for perfect boots for a quarter of a century, and have patronized all the so-called "improvements" to be found. Each one has been more incorrect in principle, and more uncomfortable in practical use, than the other; but I find in McComber's system what seems to me to be the true principle. I do not see how the tenderest foot can be distorted by a boot made upon his last, or would I believe serious discomfort to be possible under his method. For myself, I shall continue to clothe my feet with his \$16 boots just as long as I am able to pay for them. I would say the same if his price was \$100 a pair. I say this most cheerfully, and I have not less than three reasons for saying it—first, because they are the handsomest boots I ever wore; second, because they are the most comfortable; and, third, because one pair of them will outwear two or three pairs of any other make.

FRANK FULLER.

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*From L. BAILY, the well known leather dealer, 211<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Spruce and 187 and 189 William Streets, New York.*

If the pedestrian, Weston, had worn a pair of shoes made on McComber's patent lasts, he could have walked the five hundred miles on time, and without chafing his feet. I have had my boots and shoes made for many years by a boot and shoemaker whose name has been before the New York public for fifty years, and at the time of his death he was the oldest shoemaker in the city; but with all his experience, never made me a pair of boots or shoes in which I walked as comfortably (even after the breaking in, as it is commonly called among shoemakers) as I have walked from the first hour I put a boot or shoe upon my feet made upon the McComber last. I have a good platform of sole to stand upon, which remains under the bearings of the foot, and the upper leather presses the foot evenly on every part without straining the leather, as well as without compression or friction upon the foot. They are as good shape after being worn six months as after having worn them one day.

L. BAILY.

From E. H. GIBBS, M.D., of *Hall's Journal of Health*, 137 Eighth Street, New York.

Joel McComber's patent boots and shoes must commend themselves to every anatomist who will carefully study their construction with reference to the human foot, and the duties which are imposed upon it. He is clearly very far in advance of all others in this important specialty. His boots are entirely comfortable from the first hour, and are honestly made of only choice materials. They are at once the most symmetrical, the most comfortable, and the cheapest foot-clothing to be found.

E. H. GIBBS.

BROOKLYN, Nov. 24th, 1874.

From a somewhat extended observation of deformed and tender feet, and of boots and shoes as they are ordinarily made, it is apparent that *deformed feet* (i. e., a departure from the normal healthy foot) are very common, and that the coverings usually made fail to correct; and serve only to increase tenderness and deformity.

What is needed are shoes fitted to the natural foot. This work I believe the McComber last is doing, and in that belief I recommend it as the only practical application of correct principles.

JEROME WALKER, M.D.

Letter from DR. H. C. VOGELL.

COLD SPRING, L. I., June 1, 1874.

F. EDWARDS, ESQ. *Dear Sir:* I am happy to say that the shoes made upon the last patented by Joel McComber are a perfect fit, and far exceed my expectation in the comfort with which the last is made to support the feet. I never had a new boot or shoe before that did not cause a dread of the breaking in. In the shoes made on the McComber lasts they need no breaking in, but yield comfort the moment the foot is placed in them. It is strange, indeed, that years of agony have been suffered to exist so long without some successful attempt to remedy it. The secret disclosed in the McComber last is, that the shoe is made to fit the foot, instead of making the foot to fit the shoe. I am glad, my old friend, you have secured its use, and if your customers do not rise up and call you blessed, I shall be greatly disappointed.

Yours truly,

H. C. VOGELL.

McCOMBER'S PATENT LASTS AND PATENT BOOTS AND SHOES.

*Extract from "Hall's Medical Adviser" for January, 1875.  
W. W. Hall, A.M., M.D., Editor.*

Few of our readers are aware of the importance attached to this new invention, the introduction of which so happily meets the wants and necessities of all classes and ages in society. For centuries, in fact from the first commencement in the manufacture of boots and shoes, the wish has been uppermost that the feet could be fitted perfectly, so that there need be no pain, malformations, or trouble in wearing them; but no one, until the present, has hit upon the method to gain this result, and consequently all have experienced the same difficulty and had their full share of vexation, distress, and distortion incident to boots and shoes. The day, however, has at last arrived in which all who will can enjoy the wearing of their foot apparel, the inventor of this new last assuring them that each article made on this patent will not only fit the feet, as nicely as they could wish, but also be free from the pain, trouble and distortions attending their breaking-in. This, no doubt, seems strange language to use, and may be considered by some as hardly true; yet the inventor, Mr. Joel McComber, whose word cannot be doubted, assures all of the positive truth of the statement, and also brings forward evidence that cannot but satisfy the most exacting; and we would also add our testimony, and say that we believe, from personal experience and observation, that there is no exaggeration in the statement made, that the importance of Mr. McComber's patent can scarcely be overrated, and that it ought to be universally adopted. The principle of this new last is based upon the foot itself, the anatomy of which has been closely studied and made, as it should be, the basis from which to construct the perfect model for fitting thoroughly the feet. In Chicago, Boston, New York and Brooklyn, as well as many other places, since the introduction of this last, it has been tested by thousands who have tried it and experienced a satisfaction thereby never known before to them, enjoying fully the comforts of walking, and the feeling of conscious pride of being handsomely and well attired, and that they possess at least one pair of boots or shoes, the wearing of which cannot cramp or injure the feet. We think the thanks of the community are due to Mr. McComber for his efforts and the results which he has accomplished, and we would suggest to all who may read this article to avail themselves of McComber's patent boots and shoes and lasts, to be found at his establishment 14 Union Square, New York, and thus be forever free from the difficulties which attach themselves to boots and shoes made in the old way.

NATICK, MASS., August 28, 1873.

MR. JOEL MCCOMBER — Dear Sir: I have been trying for several years to get boots that would fit my feet, and did not succeed until I had a pair made on your Patent Lasts you made for me. I am more than satisfied, and cheerfully recommend them to the public.

Truly yours, J. H. PARKER.

MR. JOEL MCCOMBER — Dear Sir: Having worn shoes made on Lasts of your patent qualities for the past six months, I have no hesitation in saying I have been perfectly suited, and moreover, I have never found comfort in a new pair of boots or shoes until using your Last. I am yours thankfully,

JOHN Q. ADAMS,  
State Treasurer's Office, Boston, Mass.

BOSTON, September 30, 1873.

JOEL MCCOMBER — Dear Sir: It is with confidence that I can recommend your Patent Last. I have been selling boots and shoes to the retail trade in the West and South-west the past year manufactured on your Patent Last, and have yet to hear of the first instance where they are not spoken of in the most flattering terms. It has been of frequent occurrence to find a retailer who was selling boots and shoes manufactured on the McComber Last speaking in the highest terms of the excellence of fit, style, and durability, ease and comfort to the wearer, time saved in fitting a customer, &c.; all in ignorance that it was the McComber Patent Last that caused the rapid sale of that particular manufacturer, the trader having no knowledge of the McComber Last.

Yours truly, C. TOPHAM.

CHICAGO, ILL., August 1, 1871.

MR. JOEL MCCOMBER — Dear Sir: As superintendent of the Boot and Shoe Factory of Phelps, Dodge & Palmer, 48 and 50 Wabash Avenue, it has been my aim to produce work of the very highest order of merit, and have adopted many new features in the manufacture of boots and shoes. But no improvement that has come under my notice approaches so near my idea of perfection as the McComber Patent Last.

Being struck by the novelty of its appearance, I examined thoroughly its construction, and was impressed with the theory and believed it practical. I at once had a pair of boots made for my own use, in order to test the principle claimed



for the Last, and gave them a thorough trial. The result was, with the consent of the firm, the introduction of the Lasts into use in the factory, and I am confident that it will be the only Last used by us. A large number of our customers have tried on the boots, and every one without exception expressed their unqualified approbation, and all that have worn them are loud in their praise. I can truly say that I never turned out work before that I felt the same confidence in, in regard to fit and general excellence, as I have done since I commenced the use of your *Lasts*.

Yours, truly,

GEORGE C. PARKER.

In a subsequent communication Mr. Parker adds :

Perhaps the best answer to your inquiry as to my better matured opinion of your Patent Lasts will be to state, that I have thrown aside every other last in the factory, and am using yours exclusively on stoga, kip, etc. For the first time in my boot and shoe manufacturing experience, I feel satisfied that I am doing my customers full and exact justice in giving them not only a good-fitting, but also a perfectly natural, easy, and good-looking boot on the foot. My first opinion of the last was, that it was particularly adapted to fine custom work, but experience has shown me that it is of as much if not more importance in the heavy stoga and kip and heavy calf for farmers as in the fine gents' boots and shoes. With this last the wearer is no longer obliged to go through the weary trial of breaking in a pair of 8 oz. upper leather boots, as it is already broken in by being made to the common shape of the human foot. It is not necessary now for a man to have a pair of boots three sizes too large for him, on account of the heavy leather hurting him when he first puts them on. A pair of stoga boots of 8 oz. upper made on your lasts will be as easy to the foot as a pair of Jadot or Mercier, and as shapely to the eye. I look to see that last adopted in all factories in a short time, as it will be impossible to sell any other boot or shoe wherever this has been introduced and made known.

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KENOSHA, WIS., Sept. 5, 1871.

MR. JOEL McCOMBER—*Dear Sir* : We have manufactured boots for the retail and jobbing trade for the last twenty-five years, and have endeavored to use the best lasts obtainable. We have used lasts made by the most noted makers in New

York, Boston, and Philadelphia; but for the past year have used your Patent Lasts, and find that we can fit our customers better and easier from our stock of *ready-made* boots, made over your lasts, than we can by measure over any others we have ever used.

Merchants and shoemakers, who buy of us by the case, make the same statement, and for durability and comfort they are unequalled by anything heretofore brought before the public. We have no hesitation in giving the Lasts our unqualified indorsement and approval, and hope, for the sake of suffering humanity, that the time is not far distant when they will be universally adopted throughout the country.

Truly yours,

F. W. LYMAN & SON.

JOEL McCOMBER, Esq. — *Dear Sir*: Having thoroughly tested your invention of Patent Lasts to fit the feet, both by wearing boots made on them and by making them to the number of about one hundred pairs in my shop for my customers, I take pleasure in certifying to their great usefulness. Those for whom we have made boots over your lasts are very loud in their praise, many saying they were well-fitted for the first time in their lives; and I would say, that to all persons who bring the McComber Lasts to my shop for their work, I do not hesitate to warrant a perfect fit every time.

Respectfully,

EDWIN A. BIGELOW,  
Eagle Shoe Store, Rockford, Ill.

MR. JOEL McCOMBER: I have tested your Patent Lasts to fit the feet by making boots over about one hundred and fifty or two hundred pairs for different persons. I have also worn a pair of boots one year made on Lasts you made for my feet. I not only find the boots comfortable and easy from the beginning, but look better and retain the proper shape till worn out, making the boots last much longer.

I am happy to say your Lasts give universal satisfaction, and would cheerfully recommend them, and will warrant a perfect fit to any person bringing the McComber Last to my shop.

G. W. PARKER,  
Wood's Block, State Street, West Rockford, Ill.

NEWARK, N. J., *March 20, 1872.*

MR. JOEL MCCOMBER—*Dear Sir:* In reply to your inquiry as to our experience in the use of boots and shoes made on your Patent Lasts, we can say that on our own feet we have found them the easiest boot we ever tried, and our customers who have worn them unite in saying the same. They certainly obviate many difficulties encountered in using the old-style last, making a more perfect-fitting and better-looking boot or shoe; and if loose, setting smoother, and if snug, much easier than anything we ever tried.

In short, we think your claims come much nearer to the truth than the claims of any other patented article in the shoe line that it has been our fortune to fall in with.

Wishing you the success your efforts should meet with, we remain yours, truly,

LAWSEN & STEEPLE,  
579 Broad, corner of Nesbit.

MR. JOEL MCCOMBER — *Dear Sir:* Having tested your Patent Lasts, both by wearing boots made over them, and by making a large number of boots on them for our customers, we take pleasure in recommending them to all who desire a well-fitting and comfortable boot. The universal testimony of those wearing boots made on them is, that they require no breaking in, look better, and wear longer than boots made over a common last. To all persons bringing these lasts to our shop, we do not hesitate to warrant a perfect fit

BROWN & WHEELER,  
330 East State Street, Rockford, Ill.

CHICAGO, *June 13, 1871.*

MR. JOEL MCCOMBER—*Dear Sir:* Having given the boots made over your Patent Last a thorough trial, I have no hesitation in giving them my unqualified approbation, and you my heartiest thanks. For comfort in wearing, perfection in fit, and good looks, they are all I could wish, while nearly a year's service attest their durability. I would advise all who desire to tread squarely, walk uprightly, and enjoy to the fullest extent the happy consciousness of being well and properly shod, to delay not in procuring boots and shoes made upon the McComber Patent Last.

Respectfully yours,

M. HEATH,  
170 and 172 Randolph St

CHICAGO, Sept. 16, 1871.

MR. JOEL McCOMBER—*Dear Sir*: The boots made over your Patent Lasts have given entire satisfaction. I walked comfortable in them the very first day. As I have made use of the boots for several months, and find them as good-fitting as when new, and no sign of treading over yet, which always troubled me in boots made over the common last, I wouldn't have boots made over any other but your Lasts.

Yours, truly, J. BAUR,  
of the firm of S. Baur & Co., dealers in Leather  
and Shoe Findings, 194 Lake St.

CHICAGO, Sept. 14, 1871.

MR. JOEL McCOMBER—*Dear Sir*: I send you this certificate in favor of your Patent Lasts, because I think they should be better known and more generally used everywhere. I now make a much better-fitting and neater-looking boot over your lasts than I could make over the old-fashioned ones, and I can warrant a fit to every one that comes.

ENDERICH & ENTZMINGER, 730 W. Lake St.

CHICAGO, 399 LAKE STREET.

MR. JOEL McCOMBER: Having worked for three months over your celebrated Patent Lasts, I am prepared to state my entire satisfaction and approval of them. I can warrant a perfect fit made over your lasts that I keep in my stock for custom work, as I intend to keep all the sizes and different widths on hand so that I can accommodate every one that favors me with his patronage.

Yours, truly, C. STELLER.

CHICAGO, Sept. 20, 1871.

MR. JOEL McCOMBER—*Dear Sir*: In reply to your inquiry as regards the sale and popularity of the boots and shoes made over your Patent Last, I can truly say, that my custom work has largely increased, and I find it difficult to keep up with the demand for the "Glove-fitting Boots." My customers are loud in their praise; and in working over your lasts I am sure of a *fit* every time, and to gain a smile of approbation from my former sore-toed and foot-pinched patrons.

Gratefully yours, JOHN B. MAEKL,  
336 W. Randolph St.

FROM JUDGE MILLER.

ROCKFORD, ILL., Jan. 18, 1871.

JOEL McCOMBER, Esq.—*Dear Sir*: Your Patent Lasts have shaped for me a pair of fine, comfortable boots, easy from the first as others fitted to the feet by long and often painful wearing. "Easy as an *old* shoe," is a familiar comparison. Those using your admirable improvement can say this of their *new* boots and shoes, made easy from the beginning on scientific principles, with a strict regard to the anatomy of the human foot. How much anguish has been suffered in shaping shoes and boots to the feet by wearing, which has crippled multitudes with corns, bunions, and distorted joints, and given a hobbling gait, now, through your invention, to be succeeded by ease, elasticity, and grace of movement.

Wishing you great success in your enterprise, I remain,  
very respectfully,

CHICAGO, Sept. 14, 1871.

MR. JOEL McCOMBER—*Dear Sir*: The boots made for me over your Patent Lasts possess every good quality you claim for them. They are a nice fit, good-looking, and adapt themselves to the feet in such a manner as to make the wearing of them a positive luxury.

In gratitude for the comfort derived, and hoping to benefit others, I cheerfully recommend your lasts, and trust they will soon come into general use.

Yours, truly,

CHAS. STOSE,  
Prop. Stose Block, 190 Randolph St.

CHICAGO, June 15, 1871.

MR. JOEL McCOMBER—*Dear Sir*: Having worn a pair of boots made over the McComber Patent Last to my entire satisfaction, it gives me pleasure to add my testimony in their favor, and cheerfully recommend them for their superior excellence, and hope they may come into the general use their merits deserve. Bad feet, caused by wearing boots and shoes wrongly constructed, is almost universal. But, thanks to your invention, I for one can rejoice in a "perfect understanding," made so entirely by the use of your Patent Lasts.

Wishing you success, I am truly yours,

P. FAHRNEY, M.D., 30 N. Dearborn St.

OAK PARK, ILL., *Sept. 18, 1871.*

MR. JOEL MCCOMBER—*Dear Sir:* I am wearing a pair of boots made over your Patent Lasts that fit me perfectly, and are every way satisfactory. The great points of excellence particularly noticable are, an equality of pressure upon all the natural bearings of the sole, and its adaptation to the shape of the foot; obviates entirely the outward pressure, which in the old style is the prolific cause of corns and bunions. From experience in wearing the McComber Glove-fitting Boot, I am induced to believe that no greater blessing could be secured to the present and rising generation than the universal adoption of your valuable improvement for the use of ladies and children. All children have their feet abused and distorted by wearing straight shoes, and the tender foot is compressed into an unnatural shape, at the very time it should be allowed to retain its natural and beautiful proportions; and I am convinced the general use of your lasts would accomplish the great good desired.

Yours, truly,

ORIN PEAK, M.D.

CHICAGO, *June 12, 1871.*

MR. JOEL MCCOMBER—*Dear Sir:* I am so well pleased with the boots I have had made on your Lasts that I have determined to have Lasts made for my wife and two children. I have had so much comfort since wearing them that I think it would be selfish in me not to provide them also with the same. Will you please name some day when I can get measures taken for them?

I have had tender feet for several years past, and always have had a great deal of trouble in breaking in boots, but these I have worn continually ever since I had them, and they have been comfortable all the while; there was no breaking in to be done, and were from the first so much more comfortable than my old ones that I have never worn the latter since I obtained these.

I have taken pains to show the boots to my friends and explain their merits, and several of my sore-footed friends are going to try your Lasts. I am not afraid to advise them to do so, for I am satisfied that the principle on which they are made is correct, and that they can not help but be pleased and benefited by them.

Yours, truly,

JULIUS L. LOVEDAY.



CHICAGO, July 14, 1871.

JOEL McCOMBER, ESQ., CHICAGO, ILL.—*My very Dear Sir:* I deem it my duty, and it is also a great pleasure to say to you, that I am highly pleased with the boots made over your Patent Lasts, made from the measure of my feet in May last. The foot balances on the sole, and the boot seems to be the shape of the foot; there was no breaking in when new, but they seemed to fit like an old boot, and they continue to remain in same shape. I have been troubled with corns and tender feet for the last thirty years, and it has been with the utmost difficulty that I could procure a pair of boots that I could wear with any degree of comfort. In fact, I have almost universally suffered from an ill-fitting boot until I procured your Lasts, since which time I have been free from all annoyance in that respect, and shall take pleasure in recommending your Lasts to all who may desire a perfect-fitting boot.

Truly yours,

JOHN HUTCHINSON,  
170 North Water Street.

CHICAGO, Jan. 4, 1871.

MR. JOEL McCOMBER—*Dear Sir:* I am forty-eight years old, and for the first time in my life I am wearing a pair of boots that fit my feet and feel comfortable. They were made over your Patent Lasts, and I am highly pleased with them in every respect.

I am very truly yours,

N. W. ABBOTT, M.D.,  
Office 161 South Clark St

MR. McCOMBER: The Lasts you made for me are entirely satisfactory. For several months past I have worn a pair of leather boots made on them, and find them very comfortable. Being accurately fitted in the beginning, they save one from the painful process of "breaking in" new boots, or in other words, fitting the *foot* to the *boot*. I think your invention a useful and humane one, entitling you to the *lasting* gratitude of all tender-footed people.

Your friend,

BEN. WINGATE,  
Firm of Wingate & Palmer hardware merchants,  
Rockford, Ill

JOEL MCCOMBER, ESQ.—*Dear Sir:* Those Lasts you made for me prove a perfect success. My boots made over them set easier, look better, and are a more perfect fit than any I ever had before, and if I could not replace them, would not take five times their cost. I would most cordially recommend your work to the confidence of the public.

Respectfully yours,

HORACE BROWN,  
Prop'r Brown's Hall, Rockford, Ill.

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#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

We, the undersigned, citizens of Rockford, Winnebago Co., Illinois, have worn boots made from Mr. Joel McComber's Patent Lasts, and would recommend them to all who may have occasion to use them. They are fully equal to all that is claimed for them. We have known Mr. McComber for several years as a resident of this city, and would recommend him to all whom he may call on in other places, as perfectly responsible and reliable, and whatever representations or statements he makes may be depended upon.

R. P. LANE.....	Prest. 2d National Bank.
SHEPHERD LEACH.....	Farmer.
ANSON S. MILLER.....	Postmaster.
DR. C. H. RITCHINGS.....	Physician and Surgeon.
THOS. D. ROBERTSON.....	Prest. Win. Nat. Bank.
M. STARR.....	Cashier " " "
R. EMERSON.....	Reaper Manufacturer.
CLARK & UTTER.....	Machinists.
FREEMAN GRAHAM.....	Prop'r Cotton Factory.
T. B. GAULT.....	Station Agent.
W. WATSON.....	Sec'y Rockford Ins. Co.
I. S. HIATT.....	County Clerk.
WM. G. KING.....	Prest. N. W. D. A.
ABRAHAM E. SMITH.....	Editor Rockford Gazette.

BANGOR, ME., Oct. 2, 1873.

MR. JOEL McCOMBER — Dear Sir: We have been selling boots and shoes made on your Patent Lasts for the past six months, and have given them a thorough and most satisfactory trial. We are glad to say that all our customers who appreciate an easy, handsome, and perfectly fitting boot, speak of them in the highest terms, and will have no others. They not only fit like a glove when new, but *retain* their shape until worn out, and do not run over. The demand is rapidly increasing, and they are superseding the work made on the common lasts.

Yours respectfully,

BUZZELL & SHAW.

BROOKLYN, Oct. 2, 1873.

MR. JOEL McCOMBER — Dear Sir: Having had an experience of twenty-five years in manufacturing and retailing boots and shoes, and having used goods made on your Patent Last for two years, I can say that I have found no last that meets my idea as well as your celebrated Patent Last. Its advantages are many, they fit the feet so perfectly that a boot or shoe made on them can be worn with comfort from the moment they are put on. Another is, boots and shoes made on your last do not run over, as those made on the old style. I take pleasure in recommending them to the shoe manufacturers and the public generally.

Yours respectfully,

F. EDWARDS,

166 and 168 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn.

NEW YORK, Sept. 8, 1873.

MR. JOEL McCOMBER — Dear Sir: We have been manufacturing and selling to retail dealers for nearly two years Women's, Misses', and Children's fine boots and shoes made on the McComber Patent Last, and take pleasure in stating that the goods have given the most unqualified satisfaction. By the use of the McComber Last, a perfect fit and good-looking boot and shoe are always obtained, and the wearer is sure to continue to use and recommend the same, and the dealer is equally delighted with the successful fit and the perfect satisfaction given his customers. We have never sold to a dealer but what wanted them again. We congratulate you on the successful introduction of the McComber Last, and consider it one of the substantial things that are absolutely indispensable to the health, comfort, and happiness of man.

Gratefully yours,

W. BRISTOL, JR., & CO., No. 8 WARREN STREET.

## REASONS WHY.

Why are the patent boots and shoes made on the McComber principle superior to all others? For at least nine reasons:

1. They are made to fit the feet, whereas according to the old plan, the feet were *made* to fit the boots and shoes, an absurd, monstrous, and pernicious custom, which has made partial or complete cripples of one-half of the human family.

2. Because the anatomy of the lower limbs, with their muscles, joints, and ligaments, as well as the feet, being carefully studied by Mr. McComber, he has succeeded in supplying foot gear that enables mankind to walk forth with that ease, grace, and confidence and dignity of carriage with which the human form divine has been so richly endowed by nature, and so ruthlessly robbed by the blundering vagaries of unscientific and arbitrary men.

3. Because the boots and shoes are made to fit easily from the first, the *Last* being better able to bear the brunt of breaking in than the feet themselves, tender organs at best, though the latter practice has been in vogue until now—a practice the cruelty of which millions will attest, and which often revives the recollection of the veritable ancient boot of the days of persecution.

4. Because they are twice as durable, the pressure being equal at all points, whereas in the old boot or shoe friction and inequality of pressure caused corns and premature wear and tear at particular points, and also endangered the feet from freezing in winter.

5. By following nature the model is more graceful, elegant, and symmetrical; though the old school of shoemakers thought that the venerable dame was no match for them, but a trial of McComber's boots will show that for the first time the centers of gravity in boot and shoe making are settled by him so precisely, that the wearer can now keep his balance, standing or walking.

6. Because easy-fitting boots and shoes are indispensable to health and good looks, and, it may be added, to the moral deportment of mankind. It is possible "The Army in Flanders" would have kept the commandment, "Thou shalt not swear," better if Joel McComber had supplied them with boots and shoes, as corns, bunions, etc., are unknown to the wearer of them.

7. Because the McComber boot tends to prevent as well as cure the manifest inclination to club feet, a terrible distortion, which is on the increase, and which the best physiologists declare possible to be entailed by hereditary transmission even when artificially originated by run-over boots and shoes.

8. Because the wearer can walk faster, farther easier, better, more comfortably, more gracefully than in any other boot or shoe.

9. Because by wearing the McComber boots and shoes, the inveterate abuse of the human feet is effectually prevented, and the image of God, thus far, preserved from deformity, as there is no cure so perfect as the absence of the disease.

### NOTICE.

To all whom it may concern, be it known, that I, JOEL McCOMBER, formerly of Rockford and Chicago, Illinois, but now residing in New York, in State of New York, have obtained Letters Patent of the United States, dated November 22d, 1870, for an improved method of constructing boots and shoes which Letters Patent cover and protect, not only the boots and shoes made in accordance with said Patent, but also the lasts on which said boots and shoes are made:

And whereas the purchasers and users of said lasts are equally liable with the makers and sellers thereof, this notice is therefore to warn all parties that no person, firm, or corporation, other than the said McCOMBER PATENT LAST COMPANY, and such parties as have been heretofore duly licensed, are authorized to make, sell, or use my improved lasts, or boots or shoes, or to use my name in connection with any lasts, or boots and shoes, and that all such trespassers will be held strictly responsible for their unlawful acts.



## DISTORTIONS OF THE FEET.

*Extract from "Hail's Journal of Health" for Nov., 1874.*

WE have lately given a good deal of our space to a discussion of this subject by Joel McComber, a practical Boot, Shoe and Last Maker for over thirty years, because we have long felt that the human race have never yet been properly dealt with in the matter of clothing for the feet. More than twenty-five years ago we wrote these words: "No other portion of the human frame is so tortured in the efforts made to clothe, protect and embellish it, as the feet. If the fashionable hat induced bunions, or if the close-fitting glove created corns, or if the cravat produced cripples, how quickly would the world be up in arms! Yet we go on from year to year, 'breaking in' our illy-formed boots and shoes, crippling and deforming the tender feet of our children, inducing enormous suffering, and laying the foundation of a multitude of diseases in the more vital organs, simply because shoemakers have no anatomical knowledge, and we have not the sense to appreciate the fact and to compel them to supply us with appropriate foot-gear." A quarter of a century has passed, and the facts are exactly the same to-day. The world has, meantime, learned a good deal about hygiene and diet and temperance, and a thousand subjects which make up the sum of human knowledge and contribute to human happiness. We have learned that our eyes and ears and teeth and digestion must have certain treatment and certain care, or they will fail us early; but we have not learned that thousands and thousands of men are actively employed day after day and year after year in constructing coverings for our feet which are certain to give us discomfort, certain to cripple us if our feet are not already distorted, and which will

unfailingly keep up the distortion which barbaric foot-clothing has already secured.

We observe with sincere satisfaction that a step has at length been taken in the right direction. For the first time in the world's history, we believe, the true principle of constructing apparel for the feet has been discovered. That principle has been described in our pages by Mr. McComber, the discoverer, and we will not undertake to repeat it. But we will assert that we have satisfied ourselves that it is strictly correct, and that deformity of the feet is impossible, if the healthy, natural foot of childhood is clothed by this method, and the method is pursued through life.

What is the remedy for all this visitation of misery? Properly shaped boots and shoes, and of course properly shaped lasts to make them on. Remember, no "breaking-in" process will accomplish the desired result. You may break in a mal-formed shoe to such an extent that you can manage to wear it, but if it is wrong in the outset, it will be wrong all through. The distortion continues, although the misery may be less apparent. Every step you take forces your foot still further over the sole outwardly, dragging the upper leather with it, and forcing the great toe still further out of a line with the rest of the foot, and so perpetuating the deformity. We have no doubt that club-foot and other pedal deformities have been occasioned by bad shoes, and we wish to impress upon parents the necessity of having the tender feet of children properly cared for. Mr. McComber is an enthusiast in his profession, an honest and worthy man, and we commend him and his grand improvement, with earnestness, to the confidence of our readers. He may be found at 14 Union Square, New York, where he makes lasts to fit all feet, and first-class boots and shoes.

On the last page I append a scale of all the different sizes and half sizes of men's, women's, boys', youths', misses', and children's lasts, giving the size in length, and six different widths on each size, which are numbered at the head of each column, from No. One to No. Six, giving the instep measure only. The ball, waist, and width of my last will have a corresponding grade with the instep measure. The first column in each table is the size or length. Suppose you want a last, boot, or shoe, size Seven, and the instep to measure eight and three fourths inches: refer to the table and you will see that it will be size Seven, No. One and if the instep measures nine inches, it will be size Seven, No. Two, &c. I have a system of cutting patterns of boots and shoes, of all kinds, so adapted to my lasts that they can be lasted without forcing, only to take the stretch out of the leather, saving time to the workman. They go on and off the foot easier, fitting the heel and ankle much closer than the old way of cutting.

To all parties taking license to use my patent, last I furnish standard patterns adapted to my last for all kinds of boots and shoes, and patterns for crimp forms, also

# SCALE OF MEASURES FOR THE MCOMBER PATENT LAST.

MEN'S, WOMEN'S, AND BOYS' LASTS.						YOUTHS', MISSES', AND CHILDREN'S LASTS.							
Size.	No. 1. Instep.	No. 2. Instep.	No. 3. Instep.	No. 4. Instep.	No. 5. Instep.	No. 6. Instep.	Size.	No. 1. Instep.	No. 2. Instep.	No. 3. Instep.	No. 4. Instep.	No. 5. Instep.	No. 6. Instep.
1	7 1/2	7 1/2	7 1/2	8	8 1/2	8 1/2	2	7 1/2	7 1/2	8	8 1/2	8 1/2	8 1/2
1 1/2	7 3/4	7 3/4	7 3/4	8 1/4	8 3/4	8 3/4	1 1/2	7 3/4	7 3/4	7 3/4	8 1/4	8 3/4	8 3/4
2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 3/4	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
2 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 3/4	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
3	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
3 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
4	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
4 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
5	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
5 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
6	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
6 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
7	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
7 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
8	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
8 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
9	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
9 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
10	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
10 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
11	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
11 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8
12	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8	1 1/2	7 7/8	7 7/8	7 7/8	8 1/2	8 7/8	8 7/8

The width has a corresponding grade with the instep measure.

## NEW ENGLAND TESTIMONIALS.

BOSTON, Aug. 23, 1873.

JOEL McCOMBER, Esq. — Dear Sir: During the last eight months we have sold about eight hundred pairs per day of men's, boys', and youth's shoes, made on the McComber patent last, and they have given general satisfaction.

RICE & HUTHINS, 89 Bedford St., Boston.

BOSTON, Aug. 22, 1873.

JOEL McCOMBER, Esq. — Dear Sir: I have proved and tested your patent last, in gents' as well as ladies' and misses' boots, and find them superior in fit and comfort, by adjusting itself to the foot, to any other last ever sold, and intend, for the future, to sell shoes made on your lasts exclusively.

JOSEPH BENARI, 413 Washington St.

BOSTON, Aug. 22, 1873.

J. McCOMBER — Dear Sir: We have sold boots and shoes made on your patent last for more than a year past, and they give the best of satisfaction. All who have worn them have expressed the opinion that, for fit and comfort, they are unsurpassed.

Yours respectfully,

N. A. MOSES & CO.

139 Court St., Boston.

NORTH BRIDGEWATER, MASS., Aug. 20, 1873.

MR. JOEL McCOMBER — Dear Sir: During the past eight months we have sold upwards of 2000 cases shoes made on the McComber patent last, and we are pleased to inform you that all our customers unite in saying that they are the best fitting goods they have ever seen. We regard it as a perfect last.

Yours truly,

J. A. & W. H. PACKARD.

BANGOR, ME., Aug. 14, 1873.

JOEL McCOMBER, Esq. — Dear Sir: About one month ago I commenced using your patent lasts, and have made one hundred pairs of custom boots, and a great many goods for my jobbing trade, and the opinion expressed by my customers is, that THE McCOMBER LAST IS A BENEFIT TO HUMANITY. It is the best manufacturing last I have ever used, as boots made upon it fit *without fail*, and it is establishing itself in this section.

Yours truly,

THOMAS HERSEY.

BOSTON, Aug. 27, 1873.

MR. JOEL McCOMBER — Dear Sir: Having worn several pairs of boots made on your patent last, I find them much superior to any I have ever worn, being more comfortable, stylish, and durable.

T. T. HARTFORD, Pattern Maker, 3 Friend St.



## NOTICE.

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THE McCOMBER PATENT LAST COMPANY has an office at 14 Union Square, New York, where it is prepared to negotiate with the proper parties, with a view to licensing such to manufacture boots and shoes, or lasts, as the case may be, under this patent, on reasonable terms. Shop and town rights, to a limited extent, may also be obtained. Any further information will be cheerfully furnished, either by letter or in person, at the office of the company.

All communications to be addressed to

JOEL McCOMBER,  
*President and General Agent,*  
14 Union Square, New York.